

The Runcorn Examiner, Saturday December 20th 1919

MR WILLIAM BENNETT

Death of a Veteran Wesleyan Stalwart

AN AGRICULTURIST

We regret to announce the death of Mr. William Bennett, of Lyndhurst, Bruche Avenue, Padgate, at the age of 84. He contracted a chill on Monday the 10th of November, which developed into an acute attack of bronchitis. Dr Wilkinson, a Manchester specialist, was consulted, and held out some hopes of his recovery; and, thanks to the unrelenting care and attention of his medical attendants, Dr James Bennett, and his successor Dr Brentnall, the bronchitis was eventually mastered: but Mr Bennett had not physical strength to overcome the supervening weakness.

He was born on the 21st of August 1835, in the house next door to president residence of his son, Alderman Arthur Bennett, at Paddington. His life, indeed, through all the intervening years, has been interlinked with Padgate; and he was, we believe, the eldest inhabitant.

FAMILY LIFE

His father, William Bennett, of Mount Cottage (now Grange Mount), settled in the place in early manhood as a farmer and cattle dealer, subsequently taking his four sons, Thomas, John, William and Joseph (of whom Mr Bennett was the last survivor), into partnership under the style of "Bennett and Sons". Upon his retirement, the business was continued under the name of "Bennett Brothers", and eventually became one of the largest in the North of England. It is still carried on by a younger generation. His mother was Miss Jane Swinton of Walnut Tree Farm, by the Mill Pool, Walton, and they left to their numerous descendants a memory of which they are proud.



Mr Bennett married, on the 6th of February 1862, Miss Harriet Jackson, daughter of John Jackson of Moore. For about 6 years they resided at Tidal Lane Farm, Padgate, subsequently moving to Bruche. On the marriage of their second son, Walter, Mr Bennett partially retired from business, and removed to Lyndhurst, which he built in 1890. Their married life was one of almost uninterrupted happiness, and they celebrated their Golden Wedding on the 6th of February 1912. The death of Mrs Bennett on the 12th of August 1917, at the similar age of 84, was a great blow to him, but he had spent a holiday with two of his married daughters in Lincolnshire during the summer: was in the enjoyment of tolerable health: and, until this illness was able to take an interest in current affairs, and, when the weather was suitable, go almost daily to Bruche, where he had spent so many happy, and successful years.

In 1893 Mr Bennett was awarded a handsome prize clock by the Royal Manchester, Liverpool and North Lancashire Agricultural Society for the best managed mixed husbandry and stock farm of not

less than 150 acres. Apart from business, his chief interest lay in the Wesleyan Church, especially at Padgate, to which he added a tower in 1906. He held many offices in the church, and in 1906 the trustees at Padgate presented him with a silver rose bowl and an illuminated address to commemorate his 50th year of continuous service. In June of present year he gave a recreation ground to his native place "as a thanks offering for all the services vouchsafed to me and to my family during the 83 years in which I have lived in Padgate, as a tribute of my admiration of the lads of the village who have fought so bravely in the Great War, and as a token of my gratitude to God for the Great Peace which I am privileged to have been spared to see."

Until the death of his wife, there had not been a single break in Mr. Bennett's family, and he leaves six children to mourn their loss. The end came very peacefully about 25 minutes past two o'clock on Sunday afternoon, in the presence of his family, to whom he was devotedly attached. The whole village is in mourning at the loss of such a venerable and familiar figure.

THE INTERNMENT

On Thursday afternoon, at Padgate Wesleyan Chapel, a memorial service was held. The Reverend A. A. Fuller conducted the service. The Rev. John T. Green read the lesson, "Now is Christ risen from the dead"; the Rev. T. Dargue (superintendent minister) led the prayer; and the Rev. A. J. Morton delivered an eloquent appreciation of a well spent life. The psalm was "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place" and the hymns were "Jesus lover of our soul", "When the day of toil is done" and "The sands of time are sinking". Mr W. H. Ward played the organ.

The internment then took place in Warrington Cemetery. The principal mourners were:

- Mrs John Houghton (only surviving sister)
- Alderman Arthur Bennett (son) and Mrs Bennett
- Mr Walter Bennett (son) and Mrs Bennett
- Mr William Bennett (nephew)
- Mr C. D. Stovin (Aby Grange Lincolnshire) and Mrs Stovin (daughter)
- Mr Norman Bennett Stovin (nephew)
- Miss Edith Annie Bennett (daughter)
- Mr J E Richardson and Mrs Richardson (daughter)
- Mr Walter Stovin (Dexthorpe, Lincolnshire) and Mrs Stovin (daughter)
- Mr W J Bennett (Poulton-le-Fylde) (nephew)
- Mr Percy Houghton Bennett (nephew)
- Dr James Bennett (nephew)
- Mr Joseph Bennett (nephew)
- Mr Herbert Hatton (nephew)
- Mr A P Grange (nephew)
- Mr John Jackson (nephew)
- Rev T F Nicholson (Cleveleys)
- Mr Frederick Wright
- Mr W Ford Newton
- Dr Brentnall
- Miss Johnson

Messrs. A Gordon Bennett (son of Alderman Bennett) and T A Rigby were prevented from being present owing to indisposition.

Mourners at the church or cemetery included:

- Miss Bennett (Bruche Heath)
- Mr and Mrs Leonard Bennett
- Mr George Mather
- Representing the Warrington Rural District Council
 - o Mr W S Howard (chairman)
 - o Mr George Brimelow
 - o Mr William Potter
 - o Mr George Walker
- Representing the Parish Council
 - o Mr J W Dyke
 - o Mr C W L Lee
- Representing the staff of Messrs Bennett and Bennett
 - o Mr Bayley
 - o Mrs Dawson
 - o Mr Sam Dawson
 - o Mrs Dainteth
 - o Mr and Mrs T B Duckworth
 - o Mr James Evans
 - o Mr J L Fryer
 - o Mr and Mrs James Gandy
 - o Miss Gandy
 - o Mr and Mrs H W Guest
 - o Mr Gunnell
 - o Mr John Hamblett
 - o Mr A Lister-Kaye
 - o Mr and Mrs James Mason
 - o Miss Mason
 - o Mr C E Parker
 - o Mr Edward Steel

The Rev R Wilcock, Vicar of Padgate, sent an exceedingly kind letter regretting that he was unable to attend in consequence of his recent accident.

The grave was decorated with ferns and chrysanthemums. By Mr Bennetts request there were no flowers at the funeral except a beautiful cross of white chrysanthemums and red carnations. This occupied the length of the coffin, and bore the inscription : "From his loving children. 'No cross, no crown'". Mr Bennetts tenants had subscribed for a wreath , but on learning of his wishes decided to expend the money in the purchase of memorial alms plates for the Padgate Wesleyan Church, over which the flag was floating half-mast as one of the many local tributes to his memory.

A memorial service will be held tomorrow (Sunday) morning at half-past ten.